

tribute to the foresight and ingenuity of those that made the investments in these structures.

Ports are our gateways to international trade, and their channels must be enhanced and maintained to accommodate the new generations of ships sailing to our shores.

Our flood damage reduction program saves lives and prevents almost \$8 in damages for each dollar spent.

Corps hydropower facilities supply 24 percent the hydropower generated in the United States.

Shore protection projects provide safety from hurricanes and other storm events for transportation, petroleum and agriculture infrastructure around our coastal waterways and deltas as well as recreational benefits, returning \$4 in benefits for each dollar invested.

Projects for water supply, irrigation, recreation and wildlife habitat provide innumerable benefits.

Investing in water resources sustains economic growth and the American worker, directly eases growing congestion on our Nation's roads and railroads and provides a finer quality of life.

Recently, the American Society of Civil Engineers gave the Nation's water a "D—"—their lowest grade—because of their steadily deteriorating condition and reliability.

Our Nation simply cannot afford for this trend to continue. The administration, whether Republican or Democrat, has consistently refused to provide the resources necessary to reverse the decline in our infrastructure.

For fiscal year 2006, the Senate has asserted leadership in reversing this trend. The Senate Bill provides \$5.3 billion for the Corps of Engineers.

The Senate has included \$180 million for the Corps' general investigations program. This account funds nearly all studies that the Corps undertakes to determine the technical adequacy, environmental sustainability and economic viability of water resource solutions. The funding will provide the Corps with a robust national program as opposed to the paltry \$95 million proposed in the administration's fiscal year 2006 budget request.

The Senate bill includes \$2.087 billion for the Corps' construction account. This account provides funding for construction of the water resource solutions authorized by the Congress. The Senate has provided nearly \$450 million more than the administration's fiscal year 2006 request. These additional funds will allow the Corps to make substantial progress on projects recommended by the budget as well as all of the ongoing projects that the administration chose not to fund.

The Senate bill includes \$2.1 billion for the operations and maintenance account. This is about \$121 million more than the President's fiscal year 2006 budget request and will allow the Corps to restore routine levels of services at Corps' facilities and provide dredging for projects that the administration has designated as low use.

The Senate bill rejects the budget proposals from the administration concerning multiple year contracting and direct funding of hydropower maintenance by the Power Marketing Administrations.

The Senate bill also recommends that the administration and the Corps go back to the drawing board on the process that they use to determine which projects should be budgeted. The current process introduces too much uncertainty into the project development process.

The administration needs to honor the commitments that they have made to local sponsors. The sponsors need the certainty that if they get their funding for these projects, the Federal Government will meet their commitments.

Finally, the Senate bill reaffirms the need for the Corps to be able to manage their program in an effective and efficient manner. The ability to reprogram project funds and the use of continuing contracts are a necessary part of this overall management strategy.

The Senate has produced a balanced and fair bill for the Corps.

Thank you Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the engrossment of the amendments and third reading of the bill. The amendments were ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH) and the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) are necessarily absent.

I also announce that the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) is absent due to death in family.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 92, nays 3, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 172 Leg.]

YEAS—92

|           |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Akaka     | Cantwell  | DeMint    |
| Alexander | Carper    | DeWine    |
| Allard    | Chafee    | Dodd      |
| Allen     | Chambliss | Dole      |
| Baucus    | Clinton   | Domenici  |
| Bennett   | Cochran   | Dorgan    |
| Biden     | Coleman   | Durbin    |
| Bingaman  | Collins   | Ensign    |
| Bond      | Conrad    | Enzi      |
| Boxer     | Cornyn    | Feingold  |
| Brownback | Corzine   | Feinstein |
| Burns     | Craig     | Frist     |
| Burr      | Crapo     | Graham    |
| Byrd      | Dayton    | Grassley  |

|            |             |           |
|------------|-------------|-----------|
| Gregg      | Levin       | Santorum  |
| Hagel      | Lincoln     | Sarbanes  |
| Harkin     | Lott        | Schumer   |
| Hatch      | Lugar       | Sessions  |
| Hutchison  | Martinez    | Shelby    |
| Inhofe     | McConnell   | Smith     |
| Inouye     | Murkowski   | Snowe     |
| Isakson    | Murray      | Stabenow  |
| Jeffords   | Nelson (FL) | Stevens   |
| Johnson    | Nelson (NE) | Talent    |
| Kennedy    | Obama       | Thomas    |
| Kerry      | Pryor       | Thune     |
| Kohl       | Reed        | Vitter    |
| Kyl        | Reid        | Voinovich |
| Landrieu   | Roberts     | Warner    |
| Lautenberg | Rockefeller | Wyden     |
| Leahy      | Salazar     |           |

NAYS—3

|        |        |        |
|--------|--------|--------|
| Coburn | McCain | Sununu |
|--------|--------|--------|

NOT VOTING—5

|         |           |         |
|---------|-----------|---------|
| Bayh    | Lieberman | Specter |
| Bunning | Mikulski  |         |

The bill (H.R. 2419), as amended, was passed.

(The bill will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.)

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. FRIST. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House and the Chair be authorized to appoint conferees.

There being no objection, the Presiding Officer appointed Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. BURNS, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. BOND, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. REID, Mr. BYRD, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. DORGAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. JOHNSON, Ms. LANDRIEU, and Mr. INOUE conferees on the part of the Senate.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— VETERANS APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate receives from the House the emergency supplemental bill for veterans health care, the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that if the bill is less than \$1.5 billion, all after the enacting clause be stricken and the text of the amendment as authorized earlier today by the Appropriations Committee to include the full \$1.5 billion as passed by the Senate yesterday by a vote of 96 to 0 be agreed to; that the bill as amended be read a third time and passed and motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?